

PATENT
454311-2200.1IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 2, 7 and 20-22 without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents.

Please amend the following claims without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents.

A-1 1. (Amended) An isolated or purified nucleic acid molecule consisting of the nucleotide sequence set forth in Figure 1 (SEQ ID NO: 1).

A-2 5. (Amended) A primer or probe which specifically hybridizes to the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1.

Please add the following claims without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents.

4 24. (New) An isolated or purified nucleic acid molecule consisting essentially of the nucleotide sequence set forth in Figure 1 (SEQ ID NO: 1), and encoding a polypeptide having the enzymatic activity of CaEss1.

A-3 25. (New) An isolated or purified nucleic acid molecule consisting of a nucleotide sequence having at least 97% homology to the nucleotide sequence set forth in Figure 1 (SEQ ID NO: 1) and encoding a polypeptide having the enzymatic activity of CaEss1, wherein homology is calculated as $(N_{ref} - N_{dif}) * 100 / N_{ref}$, wherein N_{dif} is the total number of non-identical residues in the two sequences when aligned and wherein N_{ref} is the number of residues in one of the sequences.

6 26. (New) An isolated or purified nucleic acid molecule consisting essentially of a nucleotide sequence having at least 97% homology to the nucleotide sequence set forth in Figure 1 (SEQ ID NO: 1) and encoding a polypeptide having the enzymatic activity of CaEss1, wherein homology is calculated as $(N_{ref} - N_{dif}) * 100 / N_{ref}$, wherein N_{dif} is the total number of non-identical residues in the two sequences when aligned and wherein N_{ref} is the number of residues in one of the sequences.

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27. (New) A primer or probe which specifically hybridizes, under conditions of high stringency, to the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1.

9 28. (New) An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of OW-216 (SEQ ID NO: 3). ✓

10 29. (New) An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of OW-221 (SEQ ID NO: 6). ✓

30. (New) An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting essentially of OW-216 (SEQ ID NO: 3), which specifically hybridizes to the nucleotide sequence set forth in Figure 1 (SEQ ID NO: 1).

Sub C3 31. (New) An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting essentially of OW-221 (SEQ ID NO: 6), which specifically hybridizes to the nucleotide sequence set forth in Figure 1 (SEQ ID NO: 1).

32. (New) A method for detecting *Candida albicans* in a sample comprising detecting the presence therein of a nucleic acid molecule of claims 1, 24, 25, or 26.

33. (New) A method for detecting *Candida albicans* in a sample consisting of detecting the presence therein of a nucleic acid molecule of claims 1, 24, 25, or 26.

34. (New) A vector comprising the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, 24, 25, or 26. 4, 5, 6

35. (New) A vector consisting of the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, 24, 25, or 26.

36. (New) A method for preparing CaEss1 comprising transforming a vector to contain the isolated nucleic acid molecule of claims 1, 24, 25, or 26 and obtaining expression thereof.

37. (New) A method for preparing CaEss1 consisting of transforming a vector to contain the isolated nucleic acid molecule of claims 1, 24, 25, or 26 and obtaining expression thereof.

38. (New) The method of claim 34 wherein the vector is a yeast.

39. (New) A method for obtaining an isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding CaEss1 consisting performing a polymerase chain reaction on a sample suspected to contain *CaESS1* using primers or probes which specifically hybridize thereto.--